

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, August 5. 1707.

I Am now come to examine where, and in what part of the World, any thing can be likely to happen, which may be possible to make up an equivalent to the *French* for the loss of *Toulon*.

And I'll divide my Enquiry, into the probable and improbable, into the Negative and the Positives, to Illustrate one another and make up the Variety of the search the more agreeable.

A *Ramellies*, a Victory like *Ramellies* over the Confederate Army in *Flanders*, with the Recovery of the open Cities in *Flanders*, and an Eruption into *Holland*, which such a thing would perhaps be attended with; I confess, this would go far to make the *French* amends; but of this I believe we may with Satisfaction say, even the *French* themselves will own, there is not so much as a Probability—And therefore I will no more amuse

the Reader with that; I wish the *French* Interest no fairer a Prospect any where than they have there.

Taking *Catalonia*, and beating King *Charles* out of *Barcelona*; nay, tho' they should take him Prisoner there, and completely destroy all his Interest—Tho' I confess this would be a very great blow to our Affairs, yet it would by no means make up the Conquest of *Toulon*, and the subsequent Advantages of it, which are too many to talk of, till we see the Prospect of it in a farther forwardness.

I confess, the Probability of this Blow in *Catalonia*, does not seem so remote as I could wish it to be, and the Distance, Backwardness, and Incapacity of his Friends to succour King *Charles*, makes him in my Opinion in much more Danger now than he was before, when Besieg'd in *Barcelona*; for if

if the *French* and *Spanish* Armies set down before that City again, they will perhaps make much quicker Work with it than they did before; and having a stronger Army, the *Catalans* will be sooner reduc'd, and perhaps effectually crush'd, so as to render him no help; his Horse would more effectually scour the Country, and the Siege not depend upon a Fleet but an Army—— The Loss the *French* receiv'd there appear'd plainly from this Defect, that they being not strong enough to open the Passages of the Mountains, and keep in Awe the *Catalans*, depended upon their Fleet to carry on the Siege, which Fleet not daring to look the Confederates in the Face was oblig'd to leave them, and then they had nothing to do but provide for their own Safety as well as they could; and on this Account I have often noted, That had the *French* had but a Body of 12 or 14000 Men, to have kept open the Passages of the Mountains, supply'd them with Provisions, restrain'd the *Catalans*, and strengthn'd their Hands, they had certainly carried the Town, notwithstanding the Succours brought by the Fleet, which had the *French* been able to have kept the Field, could have done nothing; and the Fleet could do no more than look on and see the Town lost.

I must own therefore, I do not look on the beating King *Charles* out of *Catalonia*, as Matters now stand, to be at all Impracticable, and if the Earl of *Galloway* should receive another Affront, as by the great Superiority of the Duke of *Berwick's* Army, is not at all improbable; I shall expect every Post, to hear of the *Spanish* and *French* Troops being under the Walls of *Barcelona*.

But after all, this whole Conquest would by no means be an Equivalent to the Loss of *Thoulon*, because I cannot imagine, if that were brought to pass, but the *Imperial* Arms would soon enter *Spain* by Land by the way of *Languedoc*; and should the Victorious Prince *EUGENE* come that length, and *Spain* be reserv'd for him to Conquer; I cannot but expect he will make shorter Work of it, than most People may imagine.

But after all, and not to build all upon Successes and Conquests of Kingdoms, I must own, there are three things now on the Stage,

whose probability to me does not seem so remote, which if they should fall out, tho' Prince *Eugene* had all the Success at *Thoulon* his Heart could expect, would unravel all his Conquests, and be a compleat equivalent to the Loss of *Thoulon*; nay, though it were follow'd with the Possession of all *Provence*, *Dauphiné*, and *Languedoc*.

1. If the *Spaniards*, and I wonder they do not, would but add 10000 *French* Troops to the Armies of the Marquis de *Baye*, and the Duke *D'offuna*; and now in the weakness of his Affairs, and the remoteness of Succour, march immediately to the Gates of *Lisbon*—In which Case they shall perhaps no more content themselves with bringing the King of *Portugal* to accept a Neutrality, but actually disposess him, and seize upon his Kingdom—I cannot but say, I believe 20000 Men at this time, are more than sufficient to do this Work, and what the Consequence of such an Attempt would be, and how far it would go to make up the Losses suffer'd at the taking of *Thoulon*, is easy to guess—The Wealth, the Shipping, the Arms, the Magazines of that Kingdom, the Spoils of the Merchants, the Wealth of the *Brazils*; 'tis a Thought too big to put into Numbers, and yet considering the easiness of it, and the fair opportunity the *French* have for it; I cannot but believe we shall too soon find them looking that way.

I believe no Man will condemn me for saying, that the whole Kingdom of *Portugal* as now circumstanc'd, for they are cut off from their own Troops, which were with the Lord *Galloway*, and near 4000 *Portuguese* Horse are there with him; I say, the whole Power of *Portugal* is not at this time able to keep the Field, against an Army of 15000 Foot, and 3000 Horse and Dragoons of *French* Troops, or *French* and *Spaniards* under *French* Discipline.

And here let me put the World in Mind of one thing, which if this War should last much longer, may, far ought I know, be learnt by Experience, and may make the Recovery of *Spain* not difficult only, but impossible.

The *Spaniards* are a brave Nation as any in the World, and tho' by the Errors of their Government, their Men are brought to

to be now of no Value in the Field ; yet I need not go far back to tell you, when the *Spanish* Infantry were the best Foot Soldiers in the World—The Histories of the Low Country War, the Relief of the Cities of *Paris* and *Roan* in three or four Sieges, are undeniable Proofs of this ; and the Great King *Henry IV.* of *France* did them Justice in that Affair, when under the Great Duke of *Parma* they reliev'd *Paris*, and retreated in his very Face without Fighting ; and he was unable to force them to Fight, but upon such Advantage, as would have been his Destruction ; upon which, storming at his own Disasters, he turn'd to some of his Great Officers, and said, *If I had that Infantry join'd to my Cavalry, I'd make War against the whole World.*

If any Man ask me, what brought the *Spaniards* down to what they are now, I'll tell him in few Words, Poverty and neglect of Discipline ; the Men are the same, their Bloods as warm, their Hearts as Great ; but what can Soldiers, naked and starv'd, untrain'd, untaught, and which is worse unpaid ; what can they do, and what can be expected from them ? this has reduc'd them from the best to the worst Troops in the World.

In laying this Truth down Historically, any body will find the Argument I am going to form from it—Recover the *Spanish* Troops from their Misery, their Poverty, and starving Circumstances ; let their Officers be encourag'd, pay them well, cloath them well, revive their Discipline, keep them in Action, and show them the Enemy, and they will Fight as well as any Nation in the World.

Again, if *French* Management comes among them, if the Regiments are given to suitable Men, their Management regulated, the Officers encourag'd, enabled to make good Equipages and well furnish'd, if the Soldiers are well paid, well cloath'd, and exactness of Discipline restor'd, as in the *French* Army is practis'd—I cannot but say, the only Advice is to push the War vigorously before these things can be done, for if the *Spaniards* recover themselves, all *Europe* will not be able to beat them.

On the other Hand, *Spain* is a very large Kingdom, and if join'd to *Portugal* much larger than *France*, and tho' it is not Populous, yet considering the few Soldiers rais'd in it hitherto, is able on the increase of this War to raise very great Armies ; it therefore very much behoves the Confederates to reduce *Spain*, before, by the Artifice and Dexterity of *French* Management, she grows formidable, even in her own Forces—We have seen the *French*, by the extraordinary Management, Discipline, and Conduct of Things bring their own Infantry, which in former Ages were very Contemptible to be very serviceable ; how much more shall they restore a Vigorous, Brave, and Valiant Nation by those Arts of War, which all the World must allow they are Masters of.

But this is by the by ; I return to my Notion of *Portugal*, and I must say, that as the State of the War now lies in *Spain*, if the *French* do not push at the *Portuguese*, they are more deficient in taking Advantages than ever I knew them, and must be blinded by some unaccountable and very unusual Infatuation—And if they do push at them, let any body answer for the *Portuguese* Defending themselves, they will be the last Nation in the World that I shall expect any thing from, but what is like the Right Wing, at the Battle of *Almanza*.

I must own therefore, that this would be a melancholy Equivalent for the Success of Prince *Eugene* at *Toulon* ; as to the Probability I leave that to the Issues of Time—'Tis according to the dispatch of either side, much of the Success will depend upon the priority of the Execution—and that nobody can answer for.

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